

Inside ICE



Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia, second from right, is joined by U.S. Representatives Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), left, Steven LaTourette (R-Ohio), second from left, and Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), right, during the announcement that ICE's arrests of predators have reached 5,000.

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ICE ARRESTS 5,000th PREDATOR

WASHINGTON, D.C. – More than 5,000 individuals have been arrested as part of the ICE's "Operation Predator" initiative launched just 20 months ago.

Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia announced the milestone in an event held at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., March 5. He was joined in the announcement by U.S. Representatives Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), Steven LaTourette (R-Ohio) and Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.).

"These results are unprecedented in law enforcement," said Garcia.

"Whether the criminal is a U.S. citizen who thinks they can travel overseas to molest children, a pornographer who trades in images of child sexual abuse, or a foreign national who has lost the privilege to remain in the United States because of a crime against a child, ICE will identify, arrest, and, where possible, remove them."

The 5,000th individual arrested was Ukrainian national Mikhail Kleyman, a 68-year-old Solon, Ohio, resident. In July 2004, police officers responded to a report that an adult male had inappropriately touched a 13-year-old mentally chal-

lenged girl at a community swimming pool. Two people witnessed the incident and officers arrested Kleyman at the scene.

On Dec. 15, 2004, Kleyman was convicted of attempted gross sexual imposition and sentenced to probation. Subsequently, ICE agents arrested Kleyman and began the process to deport him. Kleyman is currently in ICE custody.

Operation Predator evolved out of ICE's mission to find and deport illegal aliens -- particularly those with criminal records -- and

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OPERATION PREDATOR ARRESTS REACH 5,000

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reflects the agency's traditional public safety mission. But in addition to cases like Kleyman's of foreign nationals whose crimes render them deportable, Operation Predator also targets those who commit other crimes of exploitation against children, including human traffickers, international sex tourists and Internet pornographers.

"It is," Garcia said, "only through the teamwork and resolve of state, local and international law enforcement and organizations like the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, World Vision, and

the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network that we have been able to successfully pursue those who view cyberspace as another playground to stalk."

The top 10 states for Predator arrests, in alphabetical order, are Arizona (185), California (1,317), Colorado (125), Florida (189), Illinois (209), Michigan (128), Minnesota (147), New Jersey (369), New York (317) and Texas (448).

Operation Predator arrests fall into four general categories: Foreign National Child Predators; International Child Sex Tourists; Human Smug-

gling And Trafficking Of Children; and Internet Child Pornography.

Additional information about Operation Predator is available on the Web at www.ice.gov. ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. Investigators staff this hotline around the clock.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may also be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

TWO PLEAD GUILTY IN TERRORIST DOCUMENT STING

JACKSON, Miss. — Two New Orleans men have pleaded guilty to their involvement in a conspiracy to sell false documents to purported members of Abu Sayyaf, a Philippines-based group that has been designated as a foreign terrorist organization.

The guilty pleas by Cedric Carpenter and Lamont Ranson February 28 were the culmination of an eight-month investigation by ICE agents.

Carpenter and Ranson agreed to produce false identification documents—Mississippi driver's licenses, Social Security cards and birth certificates—knowing that the intended recipients of the false iden-

tification documents were represented to be members of Abu Sayyaf, which is designated as a foreign terrorist organization under U.S. law.

"Criminal organizations willing to sell false identities to anyone for any purpose pose a serious threat to our homeland," said Assistant Secretary Michael J. Garcia. "The defendants in this case had no qualms about providing fraudulent IDs to people they believed were terrorists. They now face serious consequences for their actions."

In April 2004, Carpenter and Ranson approached an individual on a cruise ship seeking illegal narcotics, and offering to provide false identity documents. Beginning in June 2004, Carpenter and Ranson had discussions with confidential informants of ICE about a proposal to produce false identification documents for a group of individuals identified as members of Abu Sayyaf. Ranson was familiar with Abu Sayyaf from his prior service with the U.S. Navy.

In early July 2004, Carpenter met with the informant and displayed a complete set of fraudulent identification documents, including a birth certificate, Social Security card and Mississippi driver's license.

After viewing the documents, the informant requested five sets of documents. Carpenter responded with an asking price of \$100,000, stating he wanted \$50,000 in currency and \$50,000 worth of heroin (about half a kilogram). In August 2004, Carpenter continued to express interest in completing the transaction, but, ultimately, no deal was ever concluded.

On August 31, 2004, ICE agents arrested Carpenter and Ranson at their homes in New Orleans.

As part of the guilty plea, both defendants admitted to conspiring to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization. Based on this charge, the defendants face a maximum sentence of 15 years imprisonment, a maximum fine of \$250,000, and a period of supervised release of up to three years.

Inside ICE is an e-newsletter produced by the ICE Office of Public Affairs to inform the public about the mission, operations and activities of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Please send comments and contributions to:

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Russ Bergeron
Editor

ICE SEIZES MILLIONS IN FAKE TRADING CARDS

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — ICE agents executed a search warrant March 2 at a Los Angeles area warehouse and seized what industry representatives say is the largest cache of counterfeit Yu-Gi-Oh! trading cards ever recovered.

Officials at the Carlsbad, Calif., regional office of Upper Deck, the company licensed to distribute the popular trading card game, say the cards seized would retail for almost \$3 million if they were genuine.

The bulk of the counterfeit game cards were discovered at a warehouse in Vernon, Calif., where a company called J.S.K. International rented space. ICE obtained a search warrant for the warehouse after a vendor in downtown Los Angeles offered to sell an ICE undercover agent 250 cartons of the counterfeit cards for more than \$36,000. The vendor told the ICE agent he could pick up the merchandise at the warehouse. Inside the warehouse, ICE agents found approximately 350 cases of the counterfeit trading cards.

“What makes this case so compelling is that the potential victims were children,” said Steve Lovett, the Supervisory Special Agent who oversees ICE’s trade fraud unit in Los Angeles. “Beyond that, the profits from the sale of counterfeit merchandise worldwide often go to support other types of criminal enterprise. That is why ICE is committed to working aggressively with private industry to dismantle these schemes.”

So far, no arrests have been made in the counterfeit card scheme, but the investigation is ongoing. ICE agents believe the bogus cards were manufactured in China. The initial lead in the probe came from investigators working for Yu-Gi-Oh!’s trademark holder, Upper Deck.

According to industry representatives, Yu-Gi-Oh! is the top-rated trading card game in the country, accounting for billions of dollars in annual retail sales worldwide.

“This seizure is part of our ongoing effort to rid the global marketplace of counterfeiting, which hurts consumers and retailers alike,” said Sharon Hannis, with Upper Deck’s fraud investigation team. “Not only is Upper Deck working with government agencies worldwide to protect the integrity of our name and brands, we are also partnering with consumers to identify those who illegally manufacture and distribute fake products.”

The Yu-Gi-Oh! franchise is based on the Yu-Gi-Oh!™ comic series from artist Kazuki Takahashi that first appeared in Japan in 1996. Yu-Gi-Oh!™ follows the adventures of Yugi, a young boy who possesses the “Millennium Puzzle” that allows him to transform into the “Game King” whenever he is challenged.



The fake Yu-Gi-Oh! Trading cards shown above were among hundreds of cartons of cards valued at \$3 million and seized by ICE agents in Los Angeles.

ICE ARRESTS 27 ILLEGAL ALIENS WORKING IN N.C. AVIATION JOBS

GREENSBORO, N.C. — ICE agents arrested 27 aliens March 8 in an investigation into their use of counterfeit documents while working as aircraft mechanics and in other aviation-related jobs at the Piedmont/Triad International Airport.

The illegal aliens arrested all worked for contract labor companies who supply workers to TIMCO, a company that performs contract maintenance on passenger and cargo aircraft. Federal officials said TIMCO was not a target and is fully cooperating in the ongoing investigation, called “Operation Fly By.”

Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, ICE has placed a priority on protecting the nation’s infrastructure. There is no reason to believe at this time that the individuals arrested were planning any terrorist activity.

Of the 27 aliens arrested, 24 were charged with being illegally present in the United States. Two others were charged with fraudulently obtaining permanent resident immigration status and one was subject to removal as a convicted aggravated felon. All 27 were charged administratively and placed in deportation proceedings. Their home countries include Sudan, Chile, Peru, Zimbabwe, the Philippines, Venezuela, Mexico and Laos.

This action is part of ICE’s Operation Tarmac, an initiative that targets employers and illegal aliens who have access to sensitive areas at airports. Under Tarmac, ICE has conducted investigations at 196 airports nationwide.

ICE NABS TWO FOR ILLEGAL EXPORTS TO IRAN, SYRIA

ICE agents have arrested two men in separate cases for attempting to illegally export items to Middle Eastern countries.

In the first case, Juan Sevilla, a suburban Los Angeles sales director for a manufacturing company, was indicted March 2 on federal charges for allegedly attempting to send industrial equipment to Iran in violation of the U.S. export embargo on goods to that country.

Sevilla, 53, of Gardena, Calif., is sales director and was previously director of international sales for United Calibration Corp., of Huntington Beach, Calif., which manufactures universal testing systems and related software technologies. Sevilla attempted to export a hydraulic testing machine designed to

test and calibrate the tensile strength of steel from California through Chicago and ultimately to Iran.

In the second case, Matt Mihsen, 47, of Dallas, Texas was indicted March 1 for attempting to export money and goods from the United States to Syria without authority, permit or license. He was also charged with attempting to smuggle over \$10,000 in U.S. currency from the United States to Syria and with making false statements to federal agents.

Mihsen was born in Syria and is a naturalized United States citizen. He is a licensed private investigator and a licensed pilot.

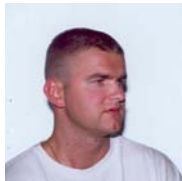
The indictment alleges that on February 15, Mihsen flew on a com-

mercial flight from Dallas, Texas, to Detroit, Mich.; his ultimate destination was Damascus, Syria. Mihsen checked his luggage in Dallas, planning to retrieve it in Syria. An outbound inspection of his luggage at Detroit Metropolitan Airport revealed that he was attempting to export certain items to Syria, including a hand-held Taser stun device; two boxes of Black Talon 9mm ammunition; a Bushnell .22 rifle scope; pepper spray; a diamond tester; a bullet-proof vest; and three Geiger counters.

The indictment also alleges that Mihsen knowingly concealed and failed to declare \$13,256 in U.S. currency he was carrying, and that he lied to ICE agents when they questioned him about the money.

ICE DEPORTS MAN WHO BEAT VICTIM WITH BAT TO BELARUS

CHICAGO, Ill. — ICE officers have deported a 25-year-old Belarus man who beat another man with a baseball bat in a parking lot for dating his ex-girlfriend.



Albert Minkevich

Albert Minkevich was turned over to ICE in January upon his release from prison and remained in custody until February 8, when he was deported to Belarus escorted by two ICE agents.

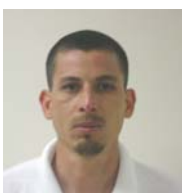
Minkevich encountered his ex-girlfriend and the victim in the parking lot of a store in Baraboo, Wisc., in March 2004. He became enraged and began to beat the victim with a baseball bat. He also caused damage to the victim's car during the attack.

Minkevich was convicted in May of aggravated battery, mayhem and criminal damage to property and sentenced to eight months in jail and five years probation.

"The residents of Baraboo should breathe a little easier knowing this man is out of the country," said ICE Office of Detention and Removal Operations Field Office Director Deborah Achim. "Aliens who commit crimes against innocent victims will be sought out, apprehended and removed from the United States."

ICE RETURNS MAN WANTED FOR DOUBLE MURDER IN HONDURAS

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — A 28-year-old Honduran man who faces double murder charges in his native country was returned by ICE to Honduras.



Wilmer Contreras-Zuniga

Wilmer Contreras-Zuniga came into ICE custody after serving a 33-month sentence in federal prison for re-entry after deportation. Contreras-Zuniga and his brother Jerlin are wanted in Honduras for the January 2002 killing of two of their brothers-in-law. The murder warrant was issued by Honduran authorities in March 2003.

"ICE is working with law enforcement agencies here and around the globe to protect our communities from violent criminals," said Gloria Kee, Field Operations Director for ICE's Office of Detention and Removal Operations in Los Angeles. "This arrest should send a strong signal to fugitives that the world's borders will not serve as protection from the law."

From October through December 2004, ICE fugitive operations teams in Los Angeles arrested 661 fugitives, about 80 percent of whom were criminals. That is a nearly 60 percent increase over the same period last year.

CHARGES FILED AGAINST MAN IN FATAL HUMAN SMUGGLING CASE

TUCSON, Ariz. – Federal charges were filed March 5 against a 31-year-old Mexican national in connection with the death of an illegal alien in a rollover accident on Interstate 10. Fortino Felipe-Agustine is charged with alien smuggling and smuggling resulting in the death of an alien, which carries a possible death sentence.

“One of our highest priorities is arresting and prosecuting smugglers who cause the death or injury of the migrants who hire them,” said Richard L. Bailey, Deputy Special Agent-in-Charge of for ICE in Tucson.

Officers with the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) were called to the scene of the accident where a 1988 Acura left the interstate, crashed through a fence, rolled over and came to rest with one of the six passengers pinned underneath.

Four of the vehicle’s occupants were found lying on the side of the road. A fifth passenger was thrown approximately 35 feet from the car. One victim was pronounced dead at the scene and the other five were transported to a hospital for medical treatment.

Two of the vehicle’s passengers identified Felipe as the driver. He later admitted during questioning by ICE agents that he knew all of the occupants of the vehicle were illegal aliens.

ICE REMOVES CAREER CRIMINAL

NEWARK, N.J. – A 32-year-old Haitian man with a six-year string of convictions in New Jersey for crimes including sexual assault on a minor, selling drugs at schools and robbery was deported by ICE Feb. 28.

Morel Pirame was escorted to Haiti by federal officers aboard a U.S. government aircraft.

Pirame is a registered sex offender and a career criminal who peddled dangerous drugs in communities and schools.

At the age of 19, he left Haiti in a small boat and was rescued at sea by the U.S. Coast Guard, which brought him to the U.S. military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He was later transported via military aircraft to Miami and paroled into the United States in May 1992 to pursue asylum, which he did not obtain.

Within two years of his arrival in the United States, Pirame began committing criminal offenses and spent more time in jail than on the street. His first convictions in 1994 were for sexual assault of a minor, criminal sex-

ual contact and endangering the welfare of a child. Over the next six years his arrest record expanded to include convictions for aggravated assault, robbery, illegal possession of a firearm, failure to register as a sex offender and multiple convictions for selling drugs on school grounds.

“He chose to peddle drugs and prey on the children of our community,” said Michael Anderson, Assistant Field Office Director for ICE in Newark. Anderson’s office is responsible for carrying out court-ordered deportations in New Jersey. “Deporting criminal aliens like Pirame is key to restoring integrity to the nation’s immigration system while preserving public safety. He twisted the American dream into a nightmare.”

During the last week of February, the women and men of the Newark field office removed 100 criminal aliens and 23 non-criminals who were illegally in the United States. Nationwide, ICE removal of criminal and other illegal aliens reached record levels in Fiscal Year 2004, with 157,281 total removals and 82,802 criminal removals.

ALGERIAN BOMB EXPERT REMOVED

WASHINGTON, D.C. — ICE has deported an Algerian bomb expert who used a diplomatic visa to illegally enter the United States.

Youcef Amirouche, a citizen of Algeria, entered the United States at Dulles International Airport under a diplomatic visa March 2, 2003. He immediately went into hiding and took jobs in two restaurants.

The diplomatic visa had been issued to Amirouche in May 6, 2002, because he was employed by the Algerian government as a bomb technician for its “Group d’ Intervention Special” (GIS) anti-terrorism division from 1998 to 2003. For unknown reasons, he quit working for the GIS sometime before entering the United States. An A-2 diplomatic visa is given to accredited foreign officials who are not diplomats. It allows them to enter the United States for official activities of a foreign government. The State Department revoked Amirouche’s visa for misuse in July 2003.

Amirouche was arrested by ICE on immigration charges Oct. 8, 2004. On Dec. 15, 2004. He agreed before an immigration judge to voluntarily leave the United States. The Algerian Embassy assisted ICE by providing the travel documents needed to carry out the deportation.

ICE learned that Amirouche might attempt to escape at some point during the removal process. This prompted the ICE officers to take additional security precautions, and Amirouche was removed without incident.

Inside ICE

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

A LIFETIME OF SERVICE



Erma Paliani, center, poses with DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff, right, and Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia. Paliani went to work for the government one month before the attack on America — in November of 1941 — just before Pearl Harbor. With almost 64 years of continuous federal service, Paliani has no plans to leave. "I'm going to continue on until I can't handle it or they don't want me around," she said.